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Wn

a cassette stage for mounting a cassette having wafers stacked thereon;
a transfer path adjacent to the cassette stage for providing space for transportation of wafers, the transfer path being at atmospheric pressure;
a plurality of processing chambers aligned with the transfer path;
a transfer mechanism installed in the transfer path for loading and unloading the wafers stacked on the cassette stage; and
at least one load lock chamber, coupled between the plurality of processing chambers and the transfer path, serving as a standby area for the wafers.

D2
5 (Amended) The multi-chamber system of an etching facility for manufacturing semiconductor devices according to claim 1, wherein each of the at least one load lock chambers comprises:

a transfer arm for receiving the wafers from the transfer mechanism and transferring the wafers to a corresponding processing chamber;
an inner transfer device for moving the transfer arm; and
gates formed on a side of the transfer path and a side of the corresponding processing chamber, respectively, the gates being selectively opened and closed to allow passage of the wafers.

D3
6 (Amended) The multi-chamber system of an etching facility for manufacturing semiconductor devices according to claim 1, wherein each of the at least one load lock

chambers has a vacuum pressure generator for forming vacuum pressure therein.

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cont*

~~1~~ 18. (Amended) The multi-chamber system of an etching facility for manufacturing semiconductor devices according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of processing chambers have one common load lock chamber.

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20. (Twice Amended) A multi-chamber system of an etching facility for manufacturing semiconductor devices comprising:

a cassette stage for mounting a cassette having wafers stacked thereon;

a transfer path adjacent to the cassette stage for providing space for transportation of wafers, the transfer path being at atmospheric pressure and having a width slightly larger than a diameter of the wafers;

a plurality of processing chambers aligned in a plurality of layers parallel to and beside the transfer path; and

a transfer mechanism capable of vertical/horizontal reciprocal movement installed in the transfer path for loading and unloading the wafers stacked on the cassette stage.

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31. (Twice Amended) A multi-chamber system of an etching facility for manufacturing semiconductor devices comprising:

a first cassette stage for mounting a cassette having unprocessed wafers

stacked thereon;

a transfer path adjacent to the first cassette stage that provides space for transportation of wafers, the transfer path being at atmospheric pressure and having a width slightly larger than a diameter of the wafers;

a plurality of processing chambers arranged in multi-layers and aligned in parallel beside the transfer path;

a transfer mechanism capable of vertical/horizontal reciprocal movement installed in the transfer path for loading and unloading the wafers stacked on the first cassette stage; and

a second cassette stage placed opposite to the first cassette stage and mounting thereon a cassette having processed wafers stacked thereon.

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-32 are pending in the present application. Claim 4 has been canceled. Replacement claims 1, 5, 7, 8, 20 and 31 are presented herewith.

Drawings

Applicants respectfully note receipt of the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review form PTO-948 along with the current non-final Office Action dated January 3, 2001, and that the drawings have been objected to by the U.S. Patent Office Draftsperson. Corrected formal drawings will be prepared and filed in due course upon